



**DORSET & WILTSHIRE  
FIRE AND RESCUE  
AUTHORITY**

**Minutes of the  
Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Authority  
at 10:00am on Wednesday 18 December 2019 at the  
Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Salisbury**

Members present: Cllr Rebecca Knox (Chair); Cllr Byron Quayle (Vice Chair); Cllr Abdul Amin; Cllr Pete Barrow; Cllr Richard Biggs; Cllr Malcolm Davies; Cllr Paul Hilliard; Cllr Peter Hutton; Cllr Bob Jones; Cllr Brian Mattock; Cllr Paul Oatway; Cllr Pip Ridout; Cllr Ann Stribley.

Officer attendance: Chief Fire Officer (CFO), Ben Ansell; Head of Financial Services & Treasurer, Ian Cotter; Clerk & Monitoring Officer, Jonathan Mair; Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO), Derek James; Director of Community Safety, Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) Jim Mahoney; Director of People Services, Jenny Long; Head of Strategic Planning & Corporate Assurance, Jill McCrae; Head of Information & Communications, Vikki Shearing; Area Manager (AM) Head of Prevention & Protection, Craig Baker; AM Response Support, Response Development, Resourcing & Review, Andy Cole; AM Swindon & Wiltshire, Ian Jeary; Group Manager (GM) Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole, Dave Graham; GM, Head of Fire Safety, Tim Gray; Management Accountant, Charlie Windebank; Democratic Services Officer, Marianne Taylor; Democratic Services Support, Steph Howard; Corporate Governance Manager, Nicki Whitehouse.

19/47            **Welcome**

19/47.1        The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed attendees.

19/48            **Apologies**

19/48.1        Apologies were received from Cllr Steve Baron, Cllr Ernie Clark, Cllr Toby Johnson, Cllr Christopher Newbury and Cllr Garry Perkins.

19/49            **Code of Conduct and Declarations of Interests**

19/49.1        The Chair asked the meeting for any disclosures of pecuniary interests under the Localism Act. There were no disclosures. The Chair reminded Members to keep their registers of pecuniary interests up to date.

*Initials* \_\_\_\_\_

- 19/50            **Review the draft minutes of Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Authority meeting on 30 September 2019 and any matters arising**
- 19/50.1        The Chair asked Members to review and approve the minutes of the last meeting. Chief Fire Officer (CFO) Ben Ansell reported that the two actions recorded in paragraphs 19/37.4 and 19/43.2 had been completed.
- 19/50.2        CFO Ben Ansell informed Members that the third and final tranche of Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) reports had been published on the Inspectorate’s website. He reported that all 45 fire and rescue services in England had now been inspected, adding that Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service was one of 16 FRSs that had received three Good ratings and the only service in the South West region that had achieved this. He added that the publication of the ‘State of Fire’ essay, by Sir Thomas Winsor had been delayed until January 2020.
- 19/50.3        **RESOLVED that the minutes be confirmed without amendment and signed by the Chair as a correct record.**
- 19/51            **Receive the draft minutes of the Finance & Governance Committee meeting on 19 September 2019**
- 19/51.1        Cllr Bob Jones introduced the minutes. He reported that since the meeting he had met with the Authority’s External Auditors, Deloitte LLP, to discuss the additional cost of the audit work related to the McCloud pension judgement. Cllr Jones had also attended a seminar run by the Internal Auditors, South West Audit Partnership Internal Audit Services, which concentrated on cyber security.
- 19/51.2        **RESOLVED: Members received the minutes of the Finance & Governance Committee on 19 September 2019.**
- 19/52            **Local Government Association Peer Review Progress Update**
- 19/52.1        Head of Strategic Planning and Corporate Assurance, Jill McCrae presented the report outlining the progress that had been made in implementing the agreed actions of the Members’ Working Group. She took Members through each of the actions in Table 1 of the appendix to the report, explaining the progress made to date. She pointed out that the new proforma for feedback from the Local Performance and Scrutiny Committees was being used later in the agenda at this meeting.
- 19/52.2        Members discussed the importance of their part in leading the Service and in future inspections, agreeing a necessity for all Members to keep up to date with developments both in this Authority and nationally. Members

*Initials* \_\_\_\_\_

reported that they found the Local Government Association's (LGA) courses useful to both those who were new to the role and those with more experience.

- 19/52.3 The Chair reported that she and the Chief Fire Officer had recently attended an LGA South West region Chief Officers and Chairs meeting. Other services had shown an interest in learning from Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service as it had achieved three 'Good' ratings in the HMICFRS inspection process. She reminded Members that the next round of inspections would include the governance of the Service and the role of Members.
- 19/52.4 Members discussed the need for all of them to be committed to development and attend all meetings of the Authority, including the Local Performance and Scrutiny committees. The Chair confirmed that it was important to inform Councillor colleagues in the constituent councils about what the Service is doing.
- 19/52.5 CFO Ben Ansell reminded Members that a national LGA Masterclass on culture, diversity and inclusion was being hosted at Service Headquarters on 30 January 2020.
- 19/52.6 **RESOLVED: Members considered and noted the progress of the actions.**
- 19/53 **Treasury Management Mid-Year Report 2019-20**
- 19/53.1 Ian Cotter, the Head of Financial Services and Treasurer, presented the Treasury Management mid-year report. He drew Members' attention to paragraph 3.4 on page 4, reporting that the Authority undertook new borrowing of £4.4m in August 2019 and the estimated level of borrowing at 31 March 2020 is just under £14.2m.
- 19/53.2 Ian Cotter reported that the Public Works Loans Board (PWLB) had recently increased (October 2019) their borrowing rates by 100 basis points with no warning. This means that PWLB is no longer our first lender of choice and that we are reassessing where we borrow in the future. He confirmed that the speed by which loans can be accessed from PWLB against other lenders means that they are likely to remain an option for borrowing.
- 19/53.3 Ian Cotter referred Members to Appendix B to the report which listed investments totalling £11.375m as at 30 September 2019. He confirmed that these were not tied up for long periods and reflect current interest rates in the market. On answering a question from a Member, Ian Cotter explained that all borrowers listed on Appendix B are UK institutions.
- 19/53.4 **RESOLVED: Members noted the Treasury Management position as at 30 September 2019.**

*Initials* \_\_\_\_\_

19/54            **Revised Capital Programme 2019-20**

19/54.1        Ian Cotter presented the report and Cllr Bob Jones reported that the Finance & Audit Committee had considered the Capital Programme in detail at its meeting on 6 December. He confirmed to Members that, as stated in paragraph 2.3.1 of the report, all 19 large fire appliances are still being purchased and that the delays were due to a procurement issue that had been out of the Service's control.

19/54.2        In answer to a question from a Member, CFO Ben Ansell explained the 'basket of goods' comparison exercises that had been carried out by the Home Office. He confirmed that the Service had done collaborative work in procurement and used national frameworks where possible, giving examples of fire kit and uniform. Ian Cotter reported that the Service had fared better than average in the two comparison exercises since combination.

19/54.3        A Member of the Finance & Audit Committee reported that he had received assurance from Officers from that Committee that property, equipment and ICT plans were interlinked and working together to support end users.

19/54.4        **RESOLVED: Members noted the changes required and approved the revised Capital Programme 2019-20 at £4.7 million.**

19/54.5        **RESOLVED: Members approved the Revised Prudential Indicators 2019-20.**

19/55            **Six-month Service Performance Review 2019-20**

19/55.1        CFO Ben Ansell drew Members' attention to Appendix A to the report and took Members through an accompanying presentation. In the first instance, he handed over to Assistant Chief Fire Officer, Jim Mahoney, who provided an update on the success of the British Red Cross Hospital Discharge pilot which had recently been run in the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Group. The pilot had provided the Service with 113 referrals from the British Red Cross for Safe and Well visits to vulnerable people. He reported that the initiative would be continued and rolled out across the whole Service area and include other hospitals.

19/55.2        CFO Ben Ansell reported that, in the six-month reporting period, there had been two lives lost in fire related incidents, one in Poole and the other in Portesham, near Weymouth. He confirmed that both would be subject to HM Coroner's Hearings in 2020.

19/55.3        CFO Ben Ansell then referred Members to a death that had occurred the day before the meeting in Devizes, which was currently a matter for police investigation.

*Initials* \_\_\_\_\_

- 19/55.4 CFO Ben Ansell reported that there had been a significant number of building regulations consultations and fire safety audits carried out in the six-month period.
- 19/55.5 CFO Ben Ansell drew Members' attention to the performance for the availability of appliances of 72%. This had been marked with 'partial progress' in the report. He reminded Members of the challenges faced in rural groups and the work still to do, but that this performance was good compared to many other Services with similar geography and demographics.
- 19/55.6 The cost of a firefighter per 1,000 population is £18,820 per year in Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service against a national average of £22,380, showing that the Service is both efficient and effective. CFO Ben Ansell reported that the Service is committed to supporting and developing its people as demonstrated in the inspection and that 18.2% of operational staff intake had been from under-represented groups, against a stretch target of 20%.
- 19/55.7 CFO Ben Ansell summarised the report stating that overall, the Service was in a good position, with positive outputs and outcomes continuing to be achieved, but that financial sustainability remains a key challenge.
- 19/55.8 Members discussed the positive impact that Safe Drive Stay Alive events had on younger drivers and the efforts that the Service and the Local Performance & Scrutiny Committees had gone to in order to engage schools in the initiative. They felt that it was important that Members were aware when any of these events were taking place in their area.
- 19/55.9 **RESOLVED: Members noted the performance of the Service over the past six-months.**
- 19/55.10 **ACTION: Democratic Services to ensure that Members are informed when a school in their area is holding a Safe Drive Stay Alive event.**
- 19/56 **Local Performance & Scrutiny (LPS) Feedback (verbal)**
- 19/56.1 The Chairs of each Local Performance & Scrutiny (LPS) Committee provided their feedback from the meetings held in November 2019.
- 19/56.2 Dorset LPS
- 19/56.3 Cllr Barrow provided feedback on the Dorset LPS meeting. He reported the positive results of the British Red Cross Hospital Discharge pilot and quoted the performance statistics from the Dorset LPS quarterly summary. Highlights of positive local work were a commitment to high performance,

*Initials* \_\_\_\_\_

on-call availability and a wide-ranging prevention agenda. He noted that the strategic partnerships were working well to coordinate activity with partners and supporting the move from a reactive to a preventative model.

- 19/56.4 Cllr Barrow reported his attendance at a recent Safer People and Responsible Communities (SPARC) event which he had felt was inspirational. In terms of issues for future Authority consideration, the Committee had discussed the following:
- the fact that British Red Cross pilot needs to cover community hospitals as well as the acute hospitals
  - how Councillors can help the Service with community engagement by using their own networks.
  - how councils can assist by enabling their staff to support the Service's priorities.
  - can councils assist by sharing relevant information?
  - the dashboard is required by April to allow thorough scrutiny of performance statistics/trends.
- 19/56.5 Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole LPS
- 19/56.6 Cllr Stribley provided feedback from the Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole LPS Committee. She highlighted positive local work as good performance against response standards and the targeting of Safe and Well visits to high and very high-risk vulnerable people, with partnerships achieving positive outcomes. Cllr Stribley reported the challenge of raising the profile of deliberate fire/arson with partners and the work to address this. Collaborative and partnership working included the Hospital Discharge Pilot scheme, which has generated referrals for Safe and Well visits for vulnerable groups and the heath mapping work with the Urban Heath Partnership to provide information including access points to crews.
- 19/56.7 Cllr Stribley raised the concern that Members need to attend the LPS committee meetings to ensure that they can be quorate, fulfil their role and prevent wasting Officers' and Members' time.
- 19/56.8 Wiltshire LPS
- 19/56.9 Cllr Paul Oatway provided feedback from the Wiltshire LPS Committee. He thanked the Officers for professional and detailed presentations. He reported the positive highlights of local work as Safe and Well showing good work with high levels of safeguarding referrals at a good level, and the availability of on-call fire engines improving.
- 19/56.10 Cllr Paul Oatway reported on the work being done relating to the impact of the Army Basing programme. As the British Army brings all its units back from Germany, a large number of soldiers and their families are settling in Wiltshire. CFO Ben Ansell reminded Members of the Service's commitment

*Initials* \_\_\_\_\_

to working with our military communities. He cited the Service's recent achievement of the Armed Forces Covenant Employer Recognition Scheme Silver Award.

- 19/56.11 Cllr Paul Oatway explained that flood gates have been installed at either end of a narrow road in Trowbridge where the Service has frequently attended to rescue drivers. This followed an initiative by a local firefighter who put together the business case. Funding for the gates had been provided by the local Area Board.
- 19/56.12 Cllr Paul Oatway reported that the challenges the Committee had discussed related to recruitment and concerns about potential 'burn-out' of current staff working beyond their contracted hours.
- 19/56.13 Examples of positive collaborative work were the *Bikerdown* and Survive the Drive events.
- 19/56.14 Items for future discussion by the Authority were:
- Members of the Wiltshire LPS had signified their commitment to attend one community event day each per year to support the Service.
  - engagement with all schools across their, and the whole Service area with Safe Drive Stay Alive events.
- 19/56.15 Swindon LPS
- 19/56.16 On behalf of Cllr Garry Perkins, Cllr Brian Mattock provided feedback from the Swindon LPS Committee. Highlights of positive local work were Safeguarding and fire-setter work. There had been good prevention work with Salamander and Safe Drive Stay Alive and a great initiative with *Bikerdown*.
- 19/56.17 The Committee had been impressed with the work with Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service and the Ministry of Defence at Shrivenham.
- 19/56.18 In terms of future Authority considerations, the Committee had discussed the expansion of Swindon Borough, with so much growth taking place and how this would impact the Service and delivery of prevention and protection work.
- 19/57 **Member Podcast**
- 19/57.1 CFO Ben Ansell introduced the Member podcast.
- 19/57.2 **ACTION: The Head of Communications & Information, Mrs Vikki Shearing to provide a link to Members for their use.**
- 19/57.3 **ACTION: Democratic Services to provide a link to the Podcast to the four constituent Authorities for access to Councillors.**

Initials \_\_\_\_\_

19/58 **Grenfell Tower Public Inquiry update**

19/58.1 CFO Ben Ansell introduced his report and played a video statement by Sir Martin Moore-Bick relating to the Phase 1 Report, which is publicly available on the Grenfell Tower Inquiry website.

19/58.2 CFO Ben Ansell reported that the Home Secretary and Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government had written jointly to all Chairs of Fire & Rescue Authorities and Chief Fire Officers. They had stressed the importance of responding to the findings and recommendations of both Sir Martin Moore-Bick and Dame Judith Hackitt's reports to date. Whilst noting that many of the recommendations from Sir Martin Moore-Bick are focused on the London Fire Brigade, they also stressed the importance of all fire and rescue services acting, both individually, and as part of wider National Fire Chiefs Council collaboration. In this letter, a Grenfell Phase 1 round table had been announced, to which all Chairs and Chief Fire Officers will be invited.

19/59 **Date of next meeting**

19/59.1 The Chair confirmed the date of the next Authority meeting as 12 February 2020 at Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Five Rivers Health and Wellbeing Centre, Hulse Road, Salisbury SP1 3NR, from 10:00am.

19/60 **To consider passing the following resolution:**

19/60.1 In accordance with Section 100A (2) of the Local Government Act 1972, to exclude the press and public for the business specified below because it is likely that if members of the public were present there would be disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 2 of Schedule 12A to the Act and the public interest in withholding the information outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information to the public.

19/60.2 **RESOLVED: To close the meeting to the press and public.**

19/61 **Fire Safety Presentation**

19/61.1 CFO Ben Ansell gave a presentation on fire safety.

Meeting closed at 12:45

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Initials \_\_\_\_\_